

The Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel
First Annual Report 1996-97

Contents

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
Complaints	6
Recommendations	9
Raising public awareness of TMAP	10
Research and Publications	12
Enquiries	14
Monitoring of magazines	15
Retail Display	16
Conclusions	17
Staff and contact details	19
APPENDIX 1	
TMAP Position statement	20
APPENDIX 2	
Tables	23

Foreword

It has been an honour to chair the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) in its successful first year of work and to present this, our first annual report.

TMAP was launched on 26 November 1996 under the glare of the media spotlight after a long period of consultation with Government officials, trade associations, and health care professionals. The expertise and energy of Nick Mazur, former director of communications at PPA, were largely influential in the successful launch of TMAP. It is the magazine industry's practical response to genuine public concern about the sexual content of teenage publications.

Self-regulation is new to the teenage magazine sector; publishers and editors, Panel members and the public have all had to learn to use the TMAP process effectively.

TMAP has been widely and effectively publicised. I am particularly pleased that while public interest in the work of TMAP has not diminished since its launch, the number of complaints made has fallen significantly during the last six months.

The monitoring by TMAP of teenage publications has been a success not only because of a knowledgeable Panel and expert staff, but also because of the support of all those involved in this sector of the industry. The commitment of editors and publishers to meeting young people's need for sound information and enlightened discussion about sex and relationships cannot now be doubted.

Recognition of this commitment came recently from Tessa Jowell, the UK's first ever Minister for Public Health. In a press release issued by the Department of Health in November last year, there was an acknowledgement of the strength of communication between teenage magazines and their readers; they speak with, not preach at young people.

The issues of teenage pregnancies and sex education are coming to the forefront of the Government's social agenda, and both TMAP and teenage magazines will serve a function in this new campaign. If magazines influence teenage behaviour so that some of the preventable health disasters of adolescents are avoided, then TMAP will have achieved its underlying purpose.

I look forward to building on our successes and to steering TMAP through its next year.

DR. FLEUR FISHER
Chair

Introduction

The remit

One of the main functions of the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) is to monitor magazines' adherence to the TMAP guidelines. The guidelines were produced in co-operation with magazine publishers, editors and retailers and have

been approved by the Home Office. The aim of the guidelines is to help publishers of teenage magazines in fulfilling their role in the social and personal development of young women. Publishers must provide accurate and relevant advice on sexual matters, whilst retailers must ensure that magazines are displayed appropriately.

The guidelines cover magazines where young women aged under 15 years make up 25 per cent or more of the total readership. One of the roles of TMAP, as set out in the guidelines, is to audit readership figures of appropriate magazines on an annual basis. This has been done using Youth TGI figures which appear at the end of this report under Table 1.

TMAP aims to provide an impartial forum for the adjudication of specific complaints about magazines within its remit.

Among the objectives of TMAP is the promotion of its work among the general public, and the provision of information and research on the role of teenage magazines in the development of adolescents.

The Panel

The Panel consists of six representatives from the fields of child development, public health, law and publishing and is chaired by Dr. Fleur Fisher.

Dr. Fleur Fisher

Until recently Head of the British Medical Association's Ethics, Science and Information Division, she is now chairman of the BMA Foundation for Aids and vice chairman of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. She was president of the Medical Women's Federation from 1996 to 1997.

Before joining the staff of the BMA in 1991, she was a member of the BMA Council, served on the Committee for Public Health and Community Health Doctors, and was the public health representative on the BMA Committee for General Practice (GMSC). She also spent six years in NHS management.

She spent fifteen years in family planning developing community services and educational programmes for doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers. She has worked on sex education programmes for Piccadilly Radio and Granada TV, including the award winning radio series "My Generation".

Dr. Diana Ernaelsteen

Dr. Diana Ernaelsteen CBE is a paediatrician. From 1983 to 1995 she was senior medical officer to the Department of Health and senior medical adviser to the Department of Education and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (OFSTED). She has been consultant medical adviser to the Department for Education and Employment since 1995. She is honorary senior consultant paediatrician to the Tavistock Clinic and chairman of the National Association for the Education of Sick Children.

Nigel Fleming QC

Nigel Fleming became a QC in 1992 and was deputy chairman of the Mental Health Act Commission from 1994-1996. He was called to the Bar in the Inner Temple in 1971 and was also a lecturer at Kingston Polytechnic from 1969-1973. He has been

in practice since 1974 and his practice has included a great deal of public policy work as Junior Counsel to the Crown (Common Law) 1987-1992.

Dr. Aidan Macfarlane

Dr. Aidan Macfarlane is a paediatrician and consultant in public health and health policy for Oxfordshire Regional Health Authority. He is a director of the National Adolescent and Student Health Unit and sits on numerous committees within the Department of Health. He acts as an adviser to the Health Education Authority.

Sarah Fisher

Sarah Fisher was appointed publisher of IPC Magazines' *Mizz* and *19* in November 1996. She joined MarketForce, the distribution arm of the company in 1990 and initially worked on women's weeklies and TV listings titles, before transferring to the Specialist Group titles including *Country Life* and *Horse & Hound*. She joined *Amateur Gardening* and *Your Garden* as a publishing assistant in 1993 and became assistant publisher on a number of titles including *Family Circle*, *Practical Parenting*, *Marie Claire*, *Options* and *Woman's Journal*.

Kevin Whitchurch

Kevin Whitchurch manages and directs North South's interests in various world-wide joint ventures - specifically *Sugar* in the UK and *That's Life* in Australia. For TMAP, he represents *Sugar* (jointly owned by North South and Attic Futura) and *TV Hits* (owned wholly by Attic Futura). Until 1995 he was a publishing director and board member of Haymarket Magazines with responsibility for *What Car ?*, *Autocar*, *FourFourTwo* and for the development of new titles within the company.

Louise Matthews

Louise Matthews is publishing director of *J17*, *Bliss*, *Looks*, *More!* and *Minx*. She manages the overall business of these five magazines overseeing strategy, editorial direction, marketing and promotion and all revenues and profit. She joined EMAP in 1985 and has experience of magazine publishing in a number of markets including computers, home interest and health. She is a board director of EMAP Elan and EMAP Metro.

The Panel meets four times a year and is administered by PPA through the TMAP secretariat.

Complaints

The Panel has met five times since its formation in November 1996: the first was a briefing meeting with the editors and publishers in the sector; the second was held in January 1997 - no complaints had been received to consider at this meeting. The third, held in March 1997 considered 26 complaints. The fourth was held in August 1997 when 86 letters of complaint were considered. The fifth was held in December 1997, and 3 complaint letters were considered.

Complaints have fallen into distinct categories:

General complaints - about the teenage magazine industry, about specific magazines but not specific articles, about teenage sexual activity and sex before marriage, about the existence of any sexual content in teenage magazines, about discussion of sexual matters in public.

Complaints outside the remit of TMAP - about magazines where less than 25 per cent of the readership are female and aged under 15 years, about articles in teenage magazines which do not contain any sexual material, about advertisements in magazines.

Complaints about items already adjudicated on by TMAP - see below

Specific complaints - about specific articles or features in magazines where more than 25 per cent of the readership is female and aged under 15 years.

A complaint about a magazine should first be addressed to the relevant publisher. If no reply or an unsatisfactory reply is received, it should then be expressed, in written form, to the TMAP secretariat for investigation.

Once TMAP has received the complaint, a request will be made to the publisher for a response if one has not already been received. The complaint will then be considered by the Panel at its next meeting.

The Panel can only adjudicate on complaints about specific articles in teenage publications. However general complaints and complaints about magazines outside the remit of TMAP are still considered and noted by the Panel, even though no adjudication can be made.

All complainants are notified in writing of the Panel's decision. If a complaint is upheld, both the complainant and the editor of the publication are informed of the Panel's adjudication.

Tables 2 and 3 at the end of this report show the split between the different types of complaint. Table 2 gives the total number of letters received by TMAP and the type of complaint is indicated. As letters often contain more than one complaint, Table 3 shows the total number of complaint components contained in these letters.

The figures are influenced by an organised campaign of letter writing. A total of 50 letters have been processed by the TMAP secretariat which bear the same

Sugar March 1997) was found to be in breach of sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the guidelines. The cover line for the piece and the presentation of the article did not sufficiently encourage a responsible attitude to sex nor was safer sex highlighted and encouraged where relevant.

The article "My teacher is my lover" (*Bliss* March 1997) was found to be in breach of sections 3.1 and 3.5 of the guidelines. In omitting editorial comment, advice and help lines in a piece describing the sexual relationship between a pupil and her teacher, the editor had not encouraged a responsible attitude towards sex or highlighted the emotional consequences of sexual activity. The Panel felt that editorial comment was essential in an article about a teacher's professional misconduct in forming an exploitative sexual relationship with a pupil.

The article "Where teenagers sell sex for designer clothes" (*Bliss* March 1997) was found to be in breach of sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.5 of the guidelines. The article, about Japanese schoolgirl prostitutes required editorial comment, without which the report did not sufficiently encourage a responsible attitude towards sex or highlight the emotional consequences of sex. There was a potential for confusion as the legal age of consent in Japan was mentioned in the article, but not the age of consent in Britain. Sex without a condom was discussed, but the not potential consequences of unsafe sex.

All the above complaints originated from features in the March editions of teenage magazines. The articles "I slept with 40 boys in 3 months" (1 complaint) and "My teacher is my lover" (10 complaints) were adjudicated by the Panel in its March meeting.

The article "Where teenagers sell sex for designer clothes" (1 complaint), from a March issue of *Bliss*, was received by the TMAP secretariat in September and adjudicated by the Panel in its December meeting. In view of the nine month period which had passed since the publication of the article, it was with considerable reluctance that the complaint was upheld. The Panel felt that since the launch of TMAP, editorial awareness has been heightened on the issue of presenting suitable and accurate information on sexual matters in teenage magazines.

Following the adjudication on “Where teenagers sell sex for designer clothes”, the Panel suggested that complaints should be received within a maximum three month time limit from the date of publication.

Recommendations

Even when the Panel does not uphold a complaint, recommendations can be made to improve the overall quality of sexual information and advice in teenage publications:

Advice columns

Where advice is being given to an adolescent who thinks he/she is homosexual or is confused in any other way about his/her sexuality, comments should be included that confusion about sexual orientation is not unusual for teenagers.

In answering letters requesting information on specific sexual acts, care should be taken to include in the response the emotional and physical consequences of sexual relationships as well as an accurate technical description of the sexual act itself. This should be in addition to the provision of specialist advice contacts and telephone numbers.

Real life stories

In some true life stories, an editorial comment may be required, offering advice as to what teenagers should do if they find themselves in similar situation with a potentially exploitative or abusive relationship for example with a teacher, much older partner or a relative. Editorial comment may take the form of an editorial “box” inserted by the main text of an article.

Features

Where newspaper captions, reported speech or visuals from other media are used, care should be taken that they are within the guidelines. Such additions will not be treated by the Panel as being separate from the main text of an article.

Time limit

The Panel recommends that a time limit of three months should be placed for the receipt of complaints by the secretariat from the time that the offending magazine article is published.

Raising public awareness of TMAP

The launch of TMAP has been well documented in the national and regional media, magazines and trade publications. Between February and December 1996, numerous articles were written by journalists detailing the teenage magazine issue and the setting up of TMAP.

During the initial months after the launch, press interest was understandably high. Between December 1996 and April 1997, the TMAP chairman Dr. Fleur Fisher participated in a total of seven radio and television programmes to promote the work of TMAP. This included ITV's *The Time, The Place* and a number of BBC regional radio shows. An article by Dr. Fisher on the vital health role of teenage magazines appeared in *Press Gazette*, and TMAP details were carried by many newspapers and magazines. TMAP issued several press releases announcing the formation and launch of the Panel as well as details of its first set of adjudications in March.

A series of articles in the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*, successfully highlighted the issue and TMAP details appeared in these papers. Readers were encouraged to complain to TMAP in general terms regarding teenage magazines. Unfortunately, TMAP was not asked to comment on the articles before they were published and its responses were not printed. As a result, the subsequent letters received by the secretariat displayed no knowledge or understanding of either the role of teenage magazines in sex education or the TMAP complaints mechanism. Complainants were still under the impression that magazines such as *Minx* and *More!* fell under the remit of the Panel, even though research figures and magazines publishers had made it clear that such magazines had a much older readership.

It was in this climate that TMAP made its first adjudications. A press release was issued discussing in detail the reasoning behind upholding complaints about two articles. However, press accounts of the adjudications tended to misrepresent TMAP as a censor rather than recognising its role as an instrument of quality control. To remedy this situation, the Panel embarked on a series of public appearances and concentrated on targeting information centres rather than the general media.

This new drive was launched in May 1997 at Magazines' 97, the premier event of the magazine publishing industry organised by PPA. Members of the Panel and teenage magazine editors discussed the role of TMAP in a specialist session entitled *Sex, drugs...and magazines*. Between May and October 1997, the Panel together with teenage magazine publishers and editors made seven presentations to a wide variety of audiences ranging from King Solomon High School to the Mothers' Union *Living with Media* conference. The aim of these presentations was to give parents, teachers and health professionals the opportunity to speak to those directly involved with teenage magazine industry and to give a balanced view of the role and work of TMAP. The guidelines and other TMAP publications were distributed in libraries across the country.

The press and other media were not ignored during this time. In July 1997, Dr. Fisher was invited to speak on a Radio 5 programme discussing sex coverage in teenage magazines as part of the Radio 5 *Youth Week*. Articles written by Ally Oliver (then editor of *Bliss*), Dr. Fisher and Nicholas Mazur (then head of the TMAP secretariat) appeared in magazines aimed at parents, teachers and health professionals.

This approach seems to have worked. Although the secretariat receives many calls and letters, the majority of these are now from teachers and students wishing to know more about TMAP. Very few complaints are received: only one specific complaint letter was adjudicated on in the Panel's December meeting. This indicates a much more positive view of both TMAP and the teenage magazine industry. This has been reinforced by the recognition of the role of teenage magazines by the Minister for Public Health in a recent press release and in increasingly favourable reports in the broadsheet press.

Future events include a meeting between Tessa Jowell, the Health Education Authority, the TMAP chairman and teenage magazine editors at PPA on 12 March 1998. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss ways in which the magazine industry can assist in the Government's campaign to curb the number of teenage pregnancies in Britain.

Dr. Fleur Fisher, the Brook Advisory Centres and editors will also be hoping to prepare a paper on teenage sexual health and magazines for submission to the International Conference on Adolescent Health in October 1998 in London.

The TMAP web site

In order to assist with the number of enquiries, a TMAP web site has been launched. The site contains the guidelines, details about how to complain, short biographies of the Panel, and the latest press releases. A link with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has been provided for those who wish to complain about an advertisement or advertising feature. This annual report will also be available onsite soon.

The web address is <http://www.ppa.co.uk> under "Public Affairs".

Research and Publications

Kaye Wellings' report

“The role of teenage magazines in the sexual health of young people” by Kaye Wellings, director of the Sexual Health Programme at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, was commissioned by PPA and published in November 1996.

This research-based report concluded that magazines have a major role to play in sexual health education. There were strong indications that those who had had sexual intercourse at a young age had been influenced by the “herding instinct” prevalent in teenage groups. In view of this, caution was urged on the presentation of sex surveys in teenage magazines because the respondents, as a self-selected volunteer group, were not representative of the age group as a whole and could therefore encourage the inaccurate belief that early sexual activity is the expected norm. There was also a recommendation that magazines should “celebrate diversity rather than uniformity” in order to encourage more individualism. Overall, teenage magazines were acknowledged as giving important information on sex and relationships. They provide young female readers with a “script” which could empower them to delay sexual intercourse. At the very least, young women are given information on contraception and how to negotiate their use to prevent unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

TMAP position statement

“Sex education - a shared responsibility” was issued by TMAP as a result of the high number of general complaints received from people concerned about the existence of any sexual content in teenage magazines.

The position statement sets out the reasons for TMAP’s support of appropriate and accurate information on sexual matters in teenage magazines. Given that school sex education is now limited by legislation, and that there are questions which teenagers find difficult to ask either teachers or parents, magazines serve an important role in filling the knowledge gap.

Sex information, per se, has been shown in international research projects to be instrumental in delaying teenagers first sexual experience. There is no proven link between the sexual content of teenage magazines and early teenage sexual activity. Major changes in adolescent sexual behaviour in the UK predated the emergence of this sector of the magazine industry. Many other European countries have much more explicit magazines yet maintain a lower rate of unwanted teenage pregnancies.

Related research

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a respected centre for reproductive health research, conducted a study into the causes and consequences of early childbearing world-

wide. The report¹, published in 1996, found that the higher a woman's level of education, the more likely she is to delay childbearing, and recommended the institution of sex education programmes to help young people understand the possible consequences of sexual relationships.

The NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, based at the University of York, published a similar report in February 1997². "Preventing and reducing the adverse effects of unintended teenage pregnancies" concentrated on providing solutions to the UK's high level of teenage pregnancies. Again, the report found that a good general education is a key factor in deferring pregnancy and that sex education neither increases sexual activity nor does it increase pregnancy rates.

The most recently published research into teenage sexual activity appeared in the British Medical Journal in January 1998³. In a survey of 935 young men and women in New Zealand, 70 per cent of the women interviewed who had had sexual intercourse before age 16 had later regretted doing so. The main reasons for early sexual experience were given as being curious about what it was like, being drunk and the "herding instinct". Lack of care in sexual health was obvious with some 13 per cent of men and 28 per cent of women who had had sex before age 16 reporting having had sexually transmitted diseases.

¹Singh/Tunick *Risks and Realities of Early Childbearing Worldwide* The Alan Guttmacher Institute December 1996

²NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, University of York *Preventing and reducing the adverse effects of unintended teenage pregnancies* Effective Health Care February 1997 Vol. 3 No 1

³ Dickson/Paul/Herbison/Silva *First sexual intercourse: age, coercion, and later regrets reported by birth cohort* British Medical Journal 3 January 1998 Vol. 316 pp29-33.

Enquiries

To date the secretariat has responded to more than 160 written and telephone requests for TMAP guidelines, the Kaye Wellings' report, and the TMAP position statement. This figure does not include Guidelines sent as a result of written complaints. A large number of these requests (around 35 per cent) have come from teachers and students involved in sex education or media programmes. About 20 per cent of requests have come from press and broadcast media. Approximately 10 per cent have come from libraries, library associations and advice centres (including the Citizens' Advice Bureau), with a further 7 per cent from organisations dealing with or aimed at young people. Around 23 per cent have general enquiries from the public (eg concerned parents), and 5 per cent were telephone complaints which the complainant did not follow up in writing.

Monitoring of magazines

One of the objectives in setting up the Panel was to monitor the sexual content of teenage magazines and to keep a register of the agony aunts and uncles employed by publishers. The aim is to establish a form of quality control with regard to the sexual content of teenage magazines and to ensure that those given the task of providing advice to teenage readers are adequately qualified to do so.

In order to minimise the administration required to monitor all relevant magazines, the Panel agreed that the secretariat, who receive all magazines coming within the remit of TMAP, should also monitor these magazines and where appropriate request information on the qualifications of advice givers. The secretariat's findings are discussed at each Panel meeting and action is agreed if necessary.

All teenage magazines which feature advice columns have submitted details of the work experience and qualifications of their agony aunts and uncles. Where necessary, the Panel has recommended that action be taken to improve the level of expertise of a magazine's advice columnists. This is a procedure which the Panel will continue to follow.

Retail display of teenage magazines

Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the guidelines concentrate on the appropriate display of teenage publications. Responsibility for appropriate display lies in the first instance with publishers, who must inform retailers and distributors of the correct positioning of their magazines (ie away from older women's titles such as *More!*, *Minx*, and *Company*). It is then the responsibility of both retailers and distributors to ensure that the requests of the publisher are executed accordingly.

TMAP has made progress in this area, the most notable example being an article by Nick Mazur, formerly head of the TMAP secretariat, published in the May edition of *Selling Magazines*. The article was a double-page spread and included a plannogramme advising retailers where to place magazines. The magazine reaches 18,000 retailers and 1,000 wholesalers, distributors and publishers. The plannogramme was used by *CTN Magazine* in an article published on 5 June.

In order to continue dialogue and exchange of information between publishers, retailers and distributors on this issue, the National Federation of Retail Newsagents has accepted an invitation from TMAP to attend a Panel meeting in March 1998.

Conclusions

The establishment of TMAP has supported two fundamental freedoms: freedom from press censorship and freedom of access to information. Easy access to appropriate, not exploitative, information and advice on sexual matters is a necessity in the light of Britain's disastrous record of unplanned teenage pregnancies⁴ and of sexually transmitted disease.

There are few other sectors of the magazine industry that are more closely in touch with the lifestyle, interests and anxieties of their readers than teenage girls' magazines. On average, this sector of the magazine industry receives about 10,000 letters a week from readers - a staggering half a million letters a year. This high level of customer communication suggests that readers see these publications as *their* magazines. They trust an editorial approach which knows and understands both the realities and the fantasies of the teenager's world, an approach which respects them and speaks their language.

The content of teenage magazines - fashion and friendship, the teen scene and the pop scene - reflect readers' expressed need for information and advice on what they see as important subjects. For teenagers these subjects inevitably include sex and relationships, and so some 10 per cent of the editorial material in many teenage publications refers to sexual topics.

Understanding emotional and physical changes, and navigating the social challenges of recent sexual maturity are demanding tasks for all adolescents. Mistakes may have life-long (and, with AIDS, life-shortening) effects. The vital role of school sex education in the provision of such information has been sadly restricted under the terms of the 1993 Education Act. The assertion that sex education should properly be left to parents, overlooks the reality that many parents are unwilling, unable or unavailable to discuss sexual topics. More crucially, this view also ignores the right of young people to have access to accurate information.

Teenage magazines have established themselves as filling a knowledge gap in sex education for young women. However, care must be taken that national sex education campaigns are not exclusively aimed at the female population. Sexual information on contraception, disease prevention and the emotional consequences of intimate relationships must also be made readily available to young men. Unfortunately, attempts at developing parallel magazines for boys have so far been unsuccessful. Although research shows that a percentage of boys do read teenage girls' magazines, it is up to Government and education authorities to formulate effective methods of reaching the young male population.

In supporting the magazine industry's own standards, publishers have continued to provide high quality, accurate and appropriate sexual information in their publications. In doing so, they have not been inhibited by the terms of the guidelines from dealing with sensitive topics on which their readers want and need information and sensible discussion. This is the best proof, if proof was needed, of the success of self-regulation within the magazine industry.

⁴ Britain's rate of teenage pregnancies is currently seven times higher than that of Holland.

Staff and contact details

The Panel

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Dr. Diana Ernaelsteen CBE		
Dr. Aidan Macfarlane		
Nigel Fleming QC		
Sarah Fisher	Publisher	IPC Magazines
Louise Matthews	Executive Publishing Director	EMAP Elan
Kevin Whitchurch	Publishing Director	North South Publications

The secretariat

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APPENDIX 1

Sex education - a shared responsibility

A position statement by the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel

In recent years there has been growing public concern about the sexual content of teenage magazines. The magazine publishing industry has responded to this concern and, in collaboration with the Home Office, has developed guidelines on the way that teenage magazines should handle sexual subject matter. The Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel (TMAP) and the guidelines were officially launched on 26 November 1996. These guidelines are only applicable to magazines where 25 per cent or more of the readership are young women under the age of fifteen.

TMAP has a remit to consider complaints from the public alleging that magazines in this sector have ignored the guidelines in specific editorial pieces.

The Panel occasionally receives complaints which do not refer to specific articles, but object in general terms to the provision of information on sexuality and sexual behaviour in teenage magazines and the way in which this information is presented.

A recent study by Kaye Wellings (1996), commissioned by the Periodical Publishers Association (PPA), revealed dramatic changes in teenage sexual behaviour over the last thirty years. The average age at which sexual intercourse is first experienced is now 17 years. Previously, the average age was 20 years for men and 21 years for women. In the UK, one in five women and one in four men now have experience of sexual intercourse before the age of 16. These changes predate the emergence of the teenage magazine sector.

We have no firm evidence to suggest that appropriate, professional advice in teenage magazines encourages people to enter into sexual relationships. An extensive world-wide comparison of teenage pregnancy by the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1997) links high occurrences of such pregnancies with poor access to sex education. Many of our European neighbours have more explicit magazines yet still maintain a lower rate of teenage pregnancy - Dutch figures are one seventh of those in the UK. The UK's depressing record of having the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe shows that British adolescents need high quality information and guidance on issues of sexual health and relationships.

While it is the responsibility of both schools and families to provide such information, there are questions that many teenagers find difficult to ask either parents or teachers. The many letters received by teenage magazine agony aunts each week bear witness to this, revealing that there is still much ignorance and anguish about issues of sexual health amongst teenagers.

School sex education in England and Wales has been the subject of both legislation and regulation by the Secretary of State for Education under the Education Reform Act 1988. In 1994, for example, the requirement for schools to cover the subject of HIV/AIDS and to ensure that pupils "understand the need to have a responsible attitude to sexual behaviour" was deleted from key stage 3 of the National Curriculum. The content of school sex education modules now depends to a significant extent on the approach of a school's governors.

Publishers have accepted the responsibility of providing teenagers with accurate information and responsible guidance during the difficult period of adolescence. To this end they have actively co-operated in the formation of the TMAP Guidelines. If publishers embrace the Guidelines in practice as well as spirit, there will be no barrier to them answering questions on sexual and emotional matters in an accurate, sensitive and informative way.

Teenage language and culture differs from that of the adult world. The use of such language may seem inappropriate to adults, but it serves a purpose with regard to the target audience. Slang terms and humour when discussing intimate details sometimes make readers feel more comfortable with the subject matter involved. If these magazines were to use adult formats and language, their message would not be heard by their young readers. The Panel supports publishers and editors in the teenage magazine industry in their efforts to present sexual and sex-related information to teenagers in an accessible and acceptable manner.

TMAP's role will continue to be one of monitoring magazines, adjudicating complaints and ensuring that those working within the teenage magazine industry adhere to the TMAP guidelines.

APPENDIX 2

Table 1	Youth TGI figures
Table 2	Complaint letters
Table 3	Complaint components